

cans also declining to participate, the Ministry was doomed from the start and only lasted two months. Freycinet succeeded him and promptly reversed his decision to co-operate with England in assuming responsibility for Egypt. The difference of opinion clouded the friendship, and before it was fully restored Gambetta was dead. The second half of the volume depicts the Boulanger episode and describes the foundation of the Franco-Russian alliance of which Freycinet and Ribot were the principal architects on the French side. The author lays down his pen in 1893 at the age of sixty-four, since he never again occupied the centre of the stage. The man who had played an active part in the war of 1870-1 lived long enough to accept a place in the reconstructed Viviani Ministry when the storm broke in 1914 and to witness the triumph of the Allies. Freycinet was a smaller man than Gambetta, Ferry and Clemenceau, but he was one of the most useful public servants of the Third Republic, and his equable temperament saved him from the fierce animosities which embittered the career of his more forceful contemporaries.

Two American Presidents between the Civil War and the war of 1914 wrote their autobiographies. Grant's reminiscences were inspired, not by the customary desire to proclaim a creed or vindicate a career, but by financial catastrophe. After his second Presidential term he made a leisurely tour round the world, and on his return to the United States he invested his capital in a business which went bankrupt. Finding himself penniless, and gripped by cancer in the throat, he wrote his *Personal Memoirs*. The book proved an instantaneous success and restored the fortunes of the family: it was the last and finest of his victories. His narrative is pedestrian, but the lack of literary skill is partially redeemed by the interest of the

theme. It is an honest, unadorned, straightforward book. There are no purple patches and he never raises his voice. No more modest autobiography has ever been written by ?. successful-man of action.

After a detailed account of his apprenticeship in the Mexican war Grant reaches the Civil War in the middle of the first volume, and the work ends with the restoration of peace. Though profoundly convinced of the justice of the cause for which he fought, he was free from bitterness against the leaders of the rebellion. He is generous in praise and sparing of blame. His best commanders were Sherman and Meade. The soldiers of the South, he declares, like their brethren of the